

Morton, PA -- On Monday, February 26, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07), a member of the Education and Labor Committee, held an Education Summit at the Delaware County Intermediate Unit to provide an opportunity for education stakeholders in the 7th district to discuss key educational issues with Congressional lawmakers and policy experts. The event consisted of panel discussions on Early Childhood, Elementary and Secondary Education, and Special Education, led by the Honorable George Miller, Chairman of the House Education and Labor Committee, and the Honorable Terrell Halaska, Assistant Secretary of Education.

A report summarizing the Summit's findings will be released to the public later in the week and will be turned into legislation.

"I believe we must do everything in our power to ensure that our children have the skills they need to compete in an increasingly global economy, which is why I sought a seat on the Education and Labor Committee," noted Joe. "The goal of today's summit is to bring together those invested in the education system to discuss challenges with those in a position to solve them. I'm honored to be joined today by Chairman Miller and the Assistant Secretary of Education, Terrell Halaska, and the other many other distinguished guests. Engaging in this dialogue is important as Congress is poised to reauthorize the No Child Left Behind Act and the Head Start program. Additionally, I will be issuing a report summarizing today's proceedings so that it can be transformed into a legislative agenda."

"As the Education and Labor Committee examines how we can strengthen the No Child Left Behind Act, it is critical that we hear from all relevant stakeholders on which of the law's provisions are working well, and which areas of the law need improvement," added Congressman George Miller. "I want to thank Congressman Sestak for convening today's summit, which provided us with valuable input from educators and experts as we approach the reauthorization process. Nothing is more important for our country than ensuring that every child receives a world-class public education, and we look forward to continuing to work with teachers, principals, superintendents, school boards, parents, families, and communities to prepare our students for success in the classroom and beyond."

The panels at the event Summit focused on the following:

Early Childhood

Pre-Kindergarten Access
Pre-Kindergarten Program Quality
Head Start Reauthorization & Funding
Pre-K and Head Start Teacher Quality

Elementary and Secondary Panel

No Child Left Behind Reauthorization (NCLB) and Funding
Assessments/Performance Measures/Growth Models (AYP)
Elementary and Secondary Education Teacher Quality
Achievement Gap (Racial, Socioeconomic) / Civil Rights Issues
Limited English Proficiency and NCLB (LEP)

Special Education

Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA) Funding
Individualized Education Program (IEP)
Nexus between IDEA and No Child Left Behind

Joe sits on the House Education and Labor Committees, Subcommittee on Early Childhood, Primary and Secondary Education where he intends to fight to make universal preschool a reality for all our children. Joe also supports efforts for greater transparency and accountability in school performance. He believes that while we must demand more from our schools, we must also invest more in them. He supports fully funding the No Child Left Behind Act, which has been underfunded over the past years.

Guests joining Joe at the Summit; included the Chairman of the US Congress' Education and Labor Committee; George Miller; and the Assistant Secretary of Education, Terrell Halaska. Panelists examined early childhood, elementary and secondary education, and special education. Also attending were Deputy Secretary Harriet Dichter, Office of Child Development and Early Learning, State of Pennsylvania; Blair Hyatt, Executive Director, Pennsylvania Head Start Association; Sarah Mead, Senior Policy Analyst, Education Sector; Dr. Carol Fixman, Executive Director, Philadelphia Education Fund; Dr. Dana Bedden, Superintendent, William Penn School District; Nancy Kennedy, Teacher, Upper Darby Senior High School; Margaret McLaughlin, Associate Director, Institute for the Study of Exceptional Children, University of Maryland; Christopher McGinley, Executive Director, Delaware County Intermediate Unit; Claire Huckel, Coordinator of Staff Training and Development, Easter Seals of Southeastern Pennsylvania

The second installment of this two-part series of Education Summits on March 16 will focus on post-secondary education, college, and advanced training. At the summit, U.S. House Majority Leader, Steny Hoyer, and the Honorable Ruben Hinojosa, Chairman of the Subcommittee on

Higher Education, Lifelong Learning, and Competitiveness.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of "DeepBlue," the Navy's anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the "Global War on Terrorism." He served as President Clinton's Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever to serve in the U.S. Congress.

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